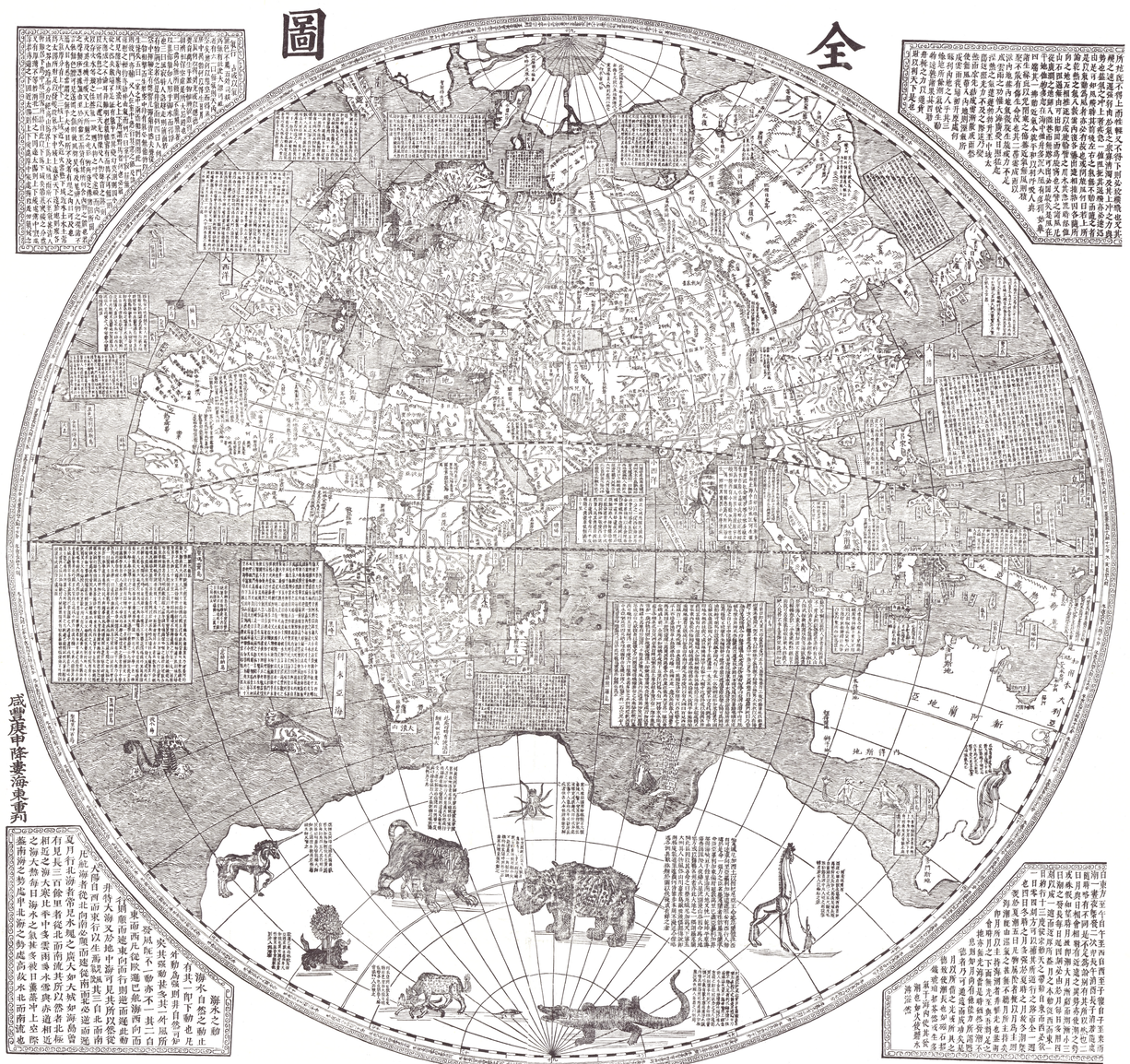
FERDINAND VERBIEST : WORLD MAP, Peking, 1674



FERDINAND VERBIEST AND HIS WORLD MAP

This is a reproduction of the World Map of the Eastern and Western Hamispheres by Ferdinand Verbiest (1623-1688), a Jesuit scholar from Belgium. Having studied theology and science in Rome and Genoa, he came to China in 1659 and served as Director of the Royal Observatory in Peking, in the Court of Emporer Kangsi of the Ching Dynasty (1644-1911). He had published in Chinese a number of books on astronomy, science, geography, surveying, etc.

For the promotion of missionary work in China and the introduction of modern civilization of Europe to China, his contributions were great. He was well known in continental Europe where his short biography can be found in every popular encyclopedia in Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, etc. However, he was not well known to English-speaking countries and his name is not recorded in Britanica, Americana, and Collier's Encyclopedias.

His original World Map was carved in wood and published in Peking in 1674. Later in 1860, it was reprinted. The originals and the reprints are extremely rare. In globular projection, it was in the equatorial scale of 1:13,000,000, and now the reproduction made of the reprint in Taipei in 1963, is in the scale of 1:28,000,000.

The insets outside the Hamispheres are explanations of natural phenomena such as atmosphere, winds, rains, clouds, movements of the ocean and its tides.

The insets inside the Hamispheres are sketches of certain geographical features, political conditions, historical events and social customs of the Continents (Africa was then called "Libyé"; nothing was told about "New Holland," which was later known as Australia) and a number of countries and islands, and descriptions of sea-going ships and twenty kinds of land animals and birds in pictures. For some sea animals, only pictures were drawn.

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